

BROADS SOCIETY

Minutes of the Main Committee held on Tuesday 18 March 2014 at the Hotel Wroxham, Wroxham

Present: Robin Godber (Chairman); Keith Bacon (Vice-Chairman),
Nick Balls, David Capp, Colin Dye, Ian Masters,
Richard Reid, Paul Savage, Mark Wells and Jill Wickens

By invitation for part of the meeting: Trudi Wakelin (BA) and Peter Howe
(CNP rep)

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

1 Apologies

Peter Horsefield

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the Meeting of 21 January 2014

The minutes, having been circulated, were agreed and signed as a true record subject to the removal of Colin Dye from the list of those present.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 Acle Straight (Minute 5.1)

The Chairman, Robin Godber, had attended a meeting of CNP Chairs and explained the Society's current position in relation to proposals for dualling the Acle Straight. Chairs of other National Park Societies had expressed sympathy with the reasons for this change of stance. Robin had pointed out the opportunities for conservation if the scheme were carried out in the right way and explained the Society's belief that it was better to be involved in the debate with the prospect of influencing the decisions rather than being in opposition and risk the development proceeding without conservation issues being taken into account. CNP officers had indicated that they would support the Society's position as far as they could within the constraints of their national policy.

Robin had written to the Highways Agency setting out the Society's position. He would circulate a copy to committee members and keep them informed.

4.2 River Chet (Minute 5.2)

This had been covered in Trudi Wakelin's report.

4.3 Pegasus Boatyard Site (Minute 5.3)

Planning approval had been given subject to a detailed list of conditions.

4.4 Mooring at Reedham (Minute 15.2)

It appeared unlikely that charges would be introduced this year.

4.5 Upper Thurne Working Group (Minute 13.5)

The Chairman reported on his meeting with John Packman during which he had made the case for retention of the Upper Thurne Working Group. He had followed this up with a letter, a copy of which he would circulate to committee members. He was due to meet Jackie Burgess, Vice-Chair of the Broads Authority at the end of the week when he would raise this and other issues of concern.

5 Co-options to the Committee

Pat Simpson was co-opted as a committee member and would be invited to attend the next meeting.

6 CNP

Peter Howe referred to a number of emails from CNP which he had forwarded to Committee members.

He drew attention to recent planning legislation which would remove constraints on barn conversions to residential accommodation but pointed out that this would not apply in National Parks.

CNP had appointed Julian Woolford as its new Chief Executive Officer for a one year term. Mr Woolford was currently employed by Natural England.

Robin Godber referred to proposals for undergrounding 43 km of electricity cabling. This did not affect the Broads as there were National Grid transmission links over the area. This situation could change if erection of pylons to transport high voltage electricity from Lowestoft to Norwich went ahead.

7 Broads Charitable Trust

Peter Howe updated the Committee on the Trust's main project – the "Love the Broads" Scheme. The Trust had recruited twelve voluntary "ambassadors" to look after the businesses signed up to "Love the Broads" including collecting money from donation boxes. These volunteers were enthusiastic and would provide much needed support "on the ground" but there was still a need for a Project Officer. The challenge to find a new source of funding remained. Another problem was the dearth of projects being submitted for funding.

In addition to Trust matters Peter reported that the Broads Hotel building in Hoveton had been demolished, removing a longstanding eyesore. Improvements to Granary Staithe were underway which would enhance the local area.

Peter left the meeting at this point.

8 Finance

8.1 Financial Statement

A statement had been circulated showing the financial position to date. The forecast end of year deficit had increased by approximately £950. This was due to an under-estimate of the annual cost of "Harnser" and the fact that advance payment had been made for a stand at the Norfolk Show. The latter would be covered by a donation from a member in the new financial year.

8.2 Lobbying Bill

The Bill had now been passed and possible implications for the Society needed to be kept under review. General advice would be published in due course.

9 Arthur Ransome Society – AGM 2015

Richard Reid had circulated details about the Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) to be held at Belsey Bridge Conference Centre from 22 to 25 May. The Society had been invited to participate by providing a speaker to give the opening address and to mount a publicity stand throughout the weekend.

Members accepted Richard's recommendation that the Society should participate and that a small planning group should be established. Richard offered to serve on this group and the Chairman agreed to join him. Other members would be co-opted as appropriate.

10 Harnser

The Treasurer had circulated notes on a meeting of the Editorial Committee's review of possible options for cost saving together with a financial analysis.

Bearing in mind the current Editor's decision to retire, the Committee agreed that further discussion should be deferred until a new Editor had been identified.

11 Anglia Afloat

Richard Reid, as the Society's columnist, reiterated his request for topics. David Capp suggested an article on the availability of funds and the lack of projects coming forward for funding. This issue was relevant not only for the Broads Charitable Trust but throughout the grant aid sector.

12 Website

Nick Ball reported that he had updated the front page and had included promotion of the 2014 photographic competition. He had also installed links to Trusts and other relevant organisations – eg How Hill.

13 Issues of Concern

- 13.1 Pylons – Lowestoft to Norwich – await developments
- 13.2 Solar Farm Development – maintain watching brief
- 13.3 Water – Ski-ing and management issues
Current arrangements satisfactory
- 13.4 River Chet – an update had been provided by Trudi Wakelin

- 13.5 Water Quality and Climate Change Adaptation
The Chairman reported on his meeting with Martin George during which the need to interact with the farming community had been identified. Robin had therefore arranged a meeting with Henry Cator . They had covered a number of areas where water quality was of major concern. Mr Cator described his vision for new farming practices in water to deal with higher water levels in the future. He was planning an event at his farm in Salhouse under the title “Turf and Surf” 29/30 September and would welcome the Society’s presence.

It was agreed that Mr Cator should be invited to talk to committee members at the next meeting. In view of this the Chairman would explain to Trudi Wakelin that pressure on time would preclude her coming to give her usual update.

It was noted that Simon Hooton had written an article for the April issue of “Harnser” on the Broads Authority’s Climate Adaptation Plan.

- 13.6 Norfolk Hub – watching brief via David Hastings
- 13.7 Acle Straight
See Minute 4.1
- 13.8 Pegasus Boatyard
See Minute 4.3

14 Publicity and Promotion

The decision to use a traditional Broads Cruise Launch loaned by Colin Dye as the central feature of the stand at the Norfolk Show had been revisited. At the recent meeting of the Southern Rivers Sub-Committee Colin described the pedal powered punts he was working on for an operator on the River Thames. It had been agreed that one of these would be ideal for the stand, providing the opportunity for visitors to “have a go” and also promote environmentally friendly transport. These pedal punts would be particularly appropriate for use along the river in Norwich. David Capp pointed out that a member of Broadsword was a manufacturer of pedal driven craft.

The Publicity Group had booked half of their programme for 2014 and confirmed that they would mount at stand at Henry Cator’s “Turf and Surf” event.

Ian Masters asked the Administrator to give him details of the Society's insurance provider.

The Society's Annual Service would be held at Beccles United Church on Sunday 27 April at 6.30 pm. It was agreed that the Society should make a donation for refreshments.

Nick Balls reported that he had revised the Society's leaflet and was in the process of redesigning the display boards.

15 Rivers Sub-Committees

15.1 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee (NRS-C)

The minutes of the meeting of 10 February 2014 had been circulated.

The following items were highlighted

Cess Staithe (Minute 3.2)

Keith Bacon reported that Martham Boatyard was now claiming the right to road leading to the staithe on the grounds of adverse possession. Inquiries into existing rights of way would need to be invoked to protect public access.

St Benet's Abbey – Interpretation developments (Minute 7.1)

The Sub-Committee had lodged an objection to the "listening post" on the grounds that it would disrupt the tranquillity of this special site. Keith Bacon cautioned against lodging objections for what might be deemed "minor concerns" since this might give the Society a reputation for causing unnecessary use of BA Officer and Committee time.

Broads Edge, Stalham – Camping Pitches (Minute 7.2)

The Society had not objected to this proposal but Paul Savage had attended a site meeting. He had seen no grounds for objection but the BA had refused the application.

Renewable Energy (Minute 7.3)

In accordance with its standard policy the Society had submitted an objection to a proposal for wind turbines at Horstead, even though the site was outside the Broads Executive Area.

Riverside Walk (Minute 6)

Jill Wickens asked for photographs to be taken during the walk.

Informal Moorings (Minute 8)

Paul Savage drew attention to the Sub-Committee's concerns about the importance of preserving informal moorings. He intended to lobby for such provision during the planned BA Workshop.

15.2 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee (SRS-C)

The minutes of the meeting of 5 March 2014 had been circulated.

Ivy House Farm (Minute 8.1)

In January the Society had considered an application to erect a marquee and ancillary building at Ivy House Farm Hotel, Ivy Lane, Lowestoft. After a site visit and consultation with residents it had been decided that the visual impact would be minimal and there was no reason to object. However, the applicant subsequently submitted an application for an extended music and drinks licence. As this application went to Waveney District Council, as the Licensing Authority, the Society was unaware of this proposal until alerted by concerned residents.

Based on this new information, the Society had submitted a strong objection on the grounds that the area is highly valued by local residents for its peace and tranquillity and the introduction of music and entertainment lasting into the small hours would be highly inappropriate. The site is also adjacent to a Nature Reserve and the anticipated disturbance from late night music is not acceptable.

17 A.O.B

17.1 Broadsword

David Capp reported a very successful year during which the team had provided the equivalent of 90 man days of work over the winter period concentrating on the Ranworth area. Six new members had joined.

17.2 Social Event

Martin George had offered to lead an evening walk at Strumpshaw Fen.

17.3 Consultation on the proposed changes to the Broads Authority Site Specific Local Plan

An email had been circulated notifying a six week consultation period from 17 March to 25 April. No decision was reached as to how to deal with this matter and it was left to the Chairman to advise further.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 13 May 2014

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.08 pm

Signed
Chairman

Date